

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

At the outset, the Examiner's attention is drawn to the attached additional documents and Form PTO/SB/08a. The Information Disclosure Statement fee for this stage of prosecution is also attached and consideration and citation of these additional documents is respectfully requested. Among the attached documents is an Office Action from the EPO in a counterpart application. It will be noted that the Examiner there considers Widyantoro to be the "closest prior art." It will also be noted that the EPO Examiner recognizes claim distinctions but raises EPO/specific issues regarding the EPO practice of requiring definition of a "technical problem" and solution therefore, etc.

In response to the Examiner's formality-based objections to claims 1, 8, 9, 10 and 11, these claims have been amended above so as to obviate the stated grounds for objection.

The rejection of claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by Shanahan '288 is respectfully traversed.

The above amendments are for the purpose of putting this application in more traditional U.S. format but, in addition, they also clarify certain aspects of the invention as set forth in independent claims 1 and 11. Some of those changes are identified below and discussed with respect to the method claim 1 but the Examiner will recognize that similar amendments have also been made to apparatus claim 11.

The claim wording in step (ii) has been amended to clarify that while the or each "*derived search criterion*" is derived from the "*received search criterion*" (and thus, as already stated in the original claim, has a "related" meaning), the or each "*derived search criterion*" is different

from the "*received search criterion*". It will be understood from page 4: 9-17 of the specification, and elsewhere, that this must be the case.

The claim wording in step (iii) has been amended to clarify that the set of information identified as being relevant to the derived search criterion differs from that identified as being relevant to the received search criterion. Again, as explained in the previous paragraph, it will be understood from applicant's specification that this must be the case as the applicant's invention is not intended to cover a situation where the respective identified sets of information are identical.

The claim wording in step (iv) has been amended to clarify that the relationships derived between the received search criterion and the derived search criterion are derived from "*similarities and differences*" between the respective identified sets of information. Again, as will be understood with reference for example to page 4:31-5:7, and elsewhere of the specification, the claims are not intended to cover a method whereby relationships between the received and derived search criterion are only ever derived by analyzing two identified sets of information which are in fact identical.

It should also be noted that in step (iii), two separate sets of information are identified from the information system, one as being relevant to the "*received search criterion*" and one as being relevant to the "*derived search criterion*".

Also, it will be noted that there does not need to be any requirement that the "derived search criterion" contains a term having a more general meaning than a corresponding term in the "received search criterion". Nor does there need to be any requirement that the "derived search criterion" contains a term having a more specific meaning than a corresponding term in the "received search criterion". These are merely possible options for ensuring that the "derived search criterion" differs in some way from the "received search criterion" (see claims 3, 4 and 5,

which relate to a third option). All that matters in this respect is that they do differ. Unlike prior art techniques, the method according to the invention does not rely on ensuring that the "derived search criterion" is more general/more specific than the "received search criterion", nor does it even rely on knowledge of whether the "derived search criterion" is more general or more specific than the "received search criterion".

According to the applicant's "analyzing" step, relationships between a "received search criterion" and a "derived search criterion" are derived *from looking at similarities and differences between the respective sets of information identified using the respective search criteria*,--rather than simply from comparing the respective search criteria. The Examiner has not made it clear if/where he has found this particular step in Shanahan. The Examiner refers briefly to paragraphs [0366], [0368] and [0410] to [0430] when discussing this step, but nothing there corresponds to looking at respective search results obtained when using a received search criterion and a second search criterion derived from this.

Other paragraphs in Shanahan that the Examiner appears to believe are relevant are paragraphs [0143], [0158 to 0160], [0282 to 0290], [0305], [0476], [0540 to 0555], and [0574 to 0577]. The most relevant of these appear to be paragraphs [0282 to 0290], as these do relate to producing a second "question" from a first "question." But the first and second questions in Shanahan are not then used for the same purposes as the "respective search criteria" according to applicant's method as claimed. In Shanahan, the process may be used for expanding or generalizing the scope of the "first question", but this is done already with the knowledge that one or more words or expressions (e.g. "*SURGICAL PROCEDURE*" or "*BODY ORGAN*") in the "second question" are more generic than the corresponding words or expressions (e.g. "*ABLATION*" or "*KIDNEY*") in the "first question." There is no disclosure in Shanahan of

analyzing information identified as a result of processing the respective questions in order to determine relationships between the questions themselves, let alone in the context of a particular information system (i.e. the information system in respect of which the "identifying" step has been performed).

By virtue of the above differences, embodiments of the present invention are capable of solving the problem set out in page 2:11-20 of the specification, by assisting in the generation of a concept dictionary of ontological information that is of relevance to the query mechanism and the information system concerned, using knowledge embedded in an existing query-able database, and which can thus be of particular use specifically in relation to subsequent queries via the same mechanism.

Given such fundamental deficiencies of Shanahan with respect to the above-discussed features of independent claims 1 and 11, it is not believed necessary at this time to discuss additional deficiencies of this reference with respect to other features of the rejected independent claims and/or dependent claims.

Suffice it to note that, as a matter of law, it is impossible for any reference to anticipate any claim unless that reference teaches each and every feature of that claim.

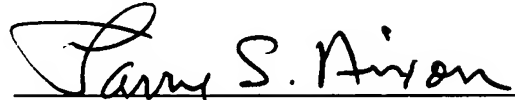
MARTIN et al
Appl. No. 10/549,365
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Accordingly, this entire application is now believed to be in allowable condition and a formal notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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